

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-06 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 DHA-02 SCA-01 SCSE-00 EB-07

IO-13 SSO-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 /057 W

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O 121300Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL TRIESTE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0525

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS TRIESTE 0144

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, IT, US

SUBJ: SEVERE SEISMIC SHOCKS IN FRIULI

REF: ROME 4834

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 0630 P.M. SEPT 11, THE FIRST OF TWO SEVERE SEISMIC SHOCKS (SPACED FOUR MINUTES APART AND REGISTERING 5.1 AND 5.4 RESPECTIVELY ON THE RICHTER SCALE STRUCK FRIULI WITH THE EPICENTER SQUARLY IN THE MAY 6 EARTHQUAKE ZONE. THE SHOCKS WERE FELT THROUGHOUT THE VENETO AND AS FAR AS NORTH AS ALTO ADIGE AND AS FAR WEST AS LOMBARDIA. FORTY PERSONS REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN HOSPITALIZED AND THERE WAS ONE REPORTED DEATH (A MAN FLEEING HIS HOME FELL AND STRUCK HIS HEAD).

2. WHILE THE FULL EXTENT OF THE PHYSICAL DAMAGE HAS YET TO BE ASSESSED, IT IS WITHOUT DOUBT SUBSTANTIAL, INCLUDING DAMAGE TO REBUILT AND NEW BUILDINGS IN THE EARTHQUAKE ZONE. OTHER SITES SUCH AS THE HISTORIC CENTER OF GEMONA HAVE BEEN FURTHER DAMAGED.

3. THE REAL COSTS WILL BE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL HOWEVER. THESE TWO MOST RECENT SHOCKS FORCED MANY FRIULANS TO RELIVE THE MAY 6 TERROR, CONTRIBUTING TO THE CREATION OF A CLIMATE OF FEAR WHICH HAS BEEN BUILDING ON THE NEAR DAILY

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(AND HIGHLY PUBLIC) SHOCKS FELT IN THE REGION, SINCE

MAY 6. TRIESTE AND VENICE RESIDENTS, FOR EXAMPLE, FLED THEIR HOMES IN PANIC ON FEELING THE SHOCKS. IN ADDITION, AFTER MUCH SACRIFICE, HARD WORK, HARDSHIP AND DEPRIVATION, THE RECONSTRUCTION EFFORT HAS BEEN SET BACK. THUS GROWING UNCERTAINTIES, IF NOT FEAR, ABOUT THE FUTURE AND DISCOURAGEMENT ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF RECONSTRUCTION MAY HELP GENERATE SIGNIFICANT PRESSURES FOR EMIGRATION FROM THE AREA - SOMETHING WHICH BOTH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE CONSISTENTLY WORKED AGAINST SINCE MAY 6.

4. LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE MORE THAN FULLY OCCUPIED WITH LATEST DEVELOPMENTS. PRINCIPAL OFFICER TRIESTE HAS THUS POSTPONED HIS VISIT TO AREA (PARA 4, REFTTEL) UNTIL MAY 13, AT WHICH TIME ITALIAN OFFICIALS WILL BE IN BETTER POSITION TO GIVE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION. MOEN

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